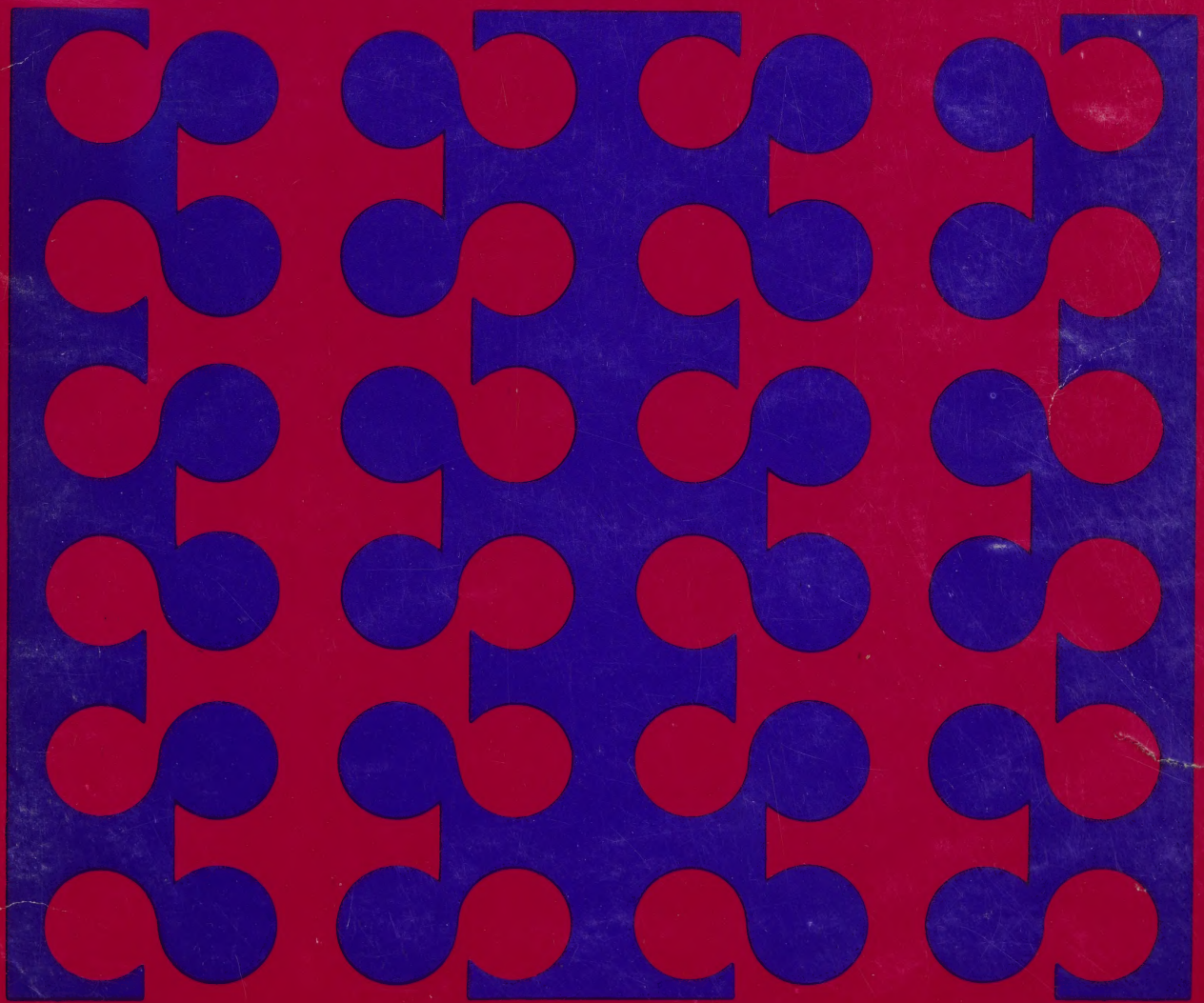
CERTIFICATION AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Report and studies

Ontario

Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario



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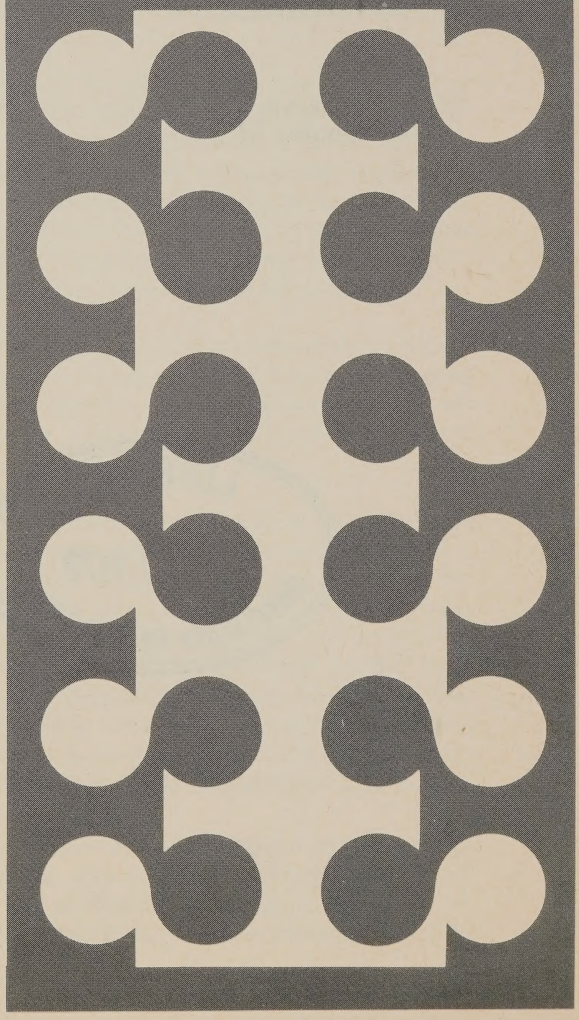
A Study Prepared for the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario



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Certification and Post-Secondary Education

Editorial Foreword

The education and certification of professional personnel remains an important function of traditional post-secondary education. Early in the Commission's work it became apparent that several critical issues arising from its terms of reference were directly related to the certification function. The so-called "post-industrial" or "technological" society is increasingly a "professionalized" society and, for most professional organizations, post-secondary educational institutions serve as the first screening device or barrier for entry into the professions.

Thus the Commission devoted considerable attention to problems of certification. In its first publication, ***Post-Secondary Education in Ontario: A Statement of Issues*** (1970), the Commission observed that certification ". . . is probably one of the greatest causes of rigidity and inequality in education", and noted the necessity of re-assessing "the need for and justification of certification and its coupling to education." At that time the Commission formulated a series of questions on this subject as follows:

> Should admission to professional schools in various individual disciplines be limited in accordance with the wishes of the related professional societies? Should educational requirements for entry to professions be as stringent as they are at present? Should we not strive towards greater occupational mobility by encouraging—or at least facilitating—lateral movements of students, rather than forcing them to "re-do" years of pre- and professional education that have often very little to do with the practice of the profession proper? Indeed, should educational institutions be divorced from the whole certification process?

In response to these and other questions, many groups and individuals addressed themselves to problems pertaining to the certification process in briefs submitted to the Commission (See ***Draft Report,*** Appendix I). The Commission's own determinations in this regard are contained in Chapter III, Section B of the ***Draft Report.***

It has frequently been suggested that our society seems almost obsessed with educational qualifications. As large scale organization, both public and private, becomes more prevalent, the need for classification of personnel (and thus for certification) seems to increase. Paper certification of educational achievements tends to become accepted uncritically as the principal indicator of "ability" or "competence". Possession of specific qualifications or certificates confers great social and financial advantage on various individuals and groups, while those who lack such credentials may find their paths toward employment and upward mobility blocked. In some measure, this situation may apply to the general arts or science degree as well as to the more obvious case of the "professional" degree.

The Commission has been well aware of the real and potential abuses of the certification process as a barrier to entry into many occupations, and of the tendency of many vocational groups and professions to lengthen the period of study required before the individual attains certification. These phenomena will be

familiar to readers of Ivar Berg's ***Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery,*** and to those acquainted with the growing literature on the subject of professionalization, including the companion piece in this series of background studies for the Commission, ***The Professions and Post-Secondary Education.***

The Commission has also been aware that several recent studies, such as the ***Royal Commission Inquiry into Civil Rights*** and the ***Report of the Committee on the Healing Arts,*** have highlighted the close inter-relationships between educational certification and the professional licensing process, and have criticized the apparent tendency of some licensing bodies to engage in restrictive practices contrary to the public interest.

The importance and complexity of these issues, and the need for a synoptic over-view of the certification process in relation to post-secondary education in Ontario, prompted the Commission to initiate a study of certification, the results of which are published here. On the basis of competitive tenders, a contract was awarded in June 1971 to Applied Research Associates, a commercial research and consulting firm based in Montreal. The director and principal author of the study was Mr. Paul Stanley. The report was received in September 1971.

The objective of the study was to describe and critically assess the merits and shortcomings of the present forms of certification used in Ontario, and to investigate the functions of certification in the educational system and in society as a whole. Chapter I sets forth the scope of the study, and the conclusions are conveniently summarized in Chapter VI.

The Commission hopes that publication of this study may help to generate and to focus further public debate on the issues presented here. The opinions and conclusions contained in the study are solely those of the authors, and publication of this study does not necessarily mean that these opinions and conclusions are endorsed by the Commission.

C E R T I F I C A T I O N
AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Applied Research Associates

December, 1971

Prepared for the Commission
on Post-Secondary Education
in Ontario.

CERTIFICATION AND POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

A. Scope of the Study

This study was undertaken in accordance with the research study specifications set out by the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario on May 18, 1971. Accordingly, our objective was:

> To describe and critically to assess the merits and shortcomings of the present forms of certification used in Ontario. To investigate the functions of certification in the educational system and in society as a whole.

Rather than undertake an analysis of each form of certification in the province, we have attempted to present a systematic framework which will highlight the legitimate functions of certification and, at the same time, account for the many problems associated with its use.

On first consideration, the study of a phenomenon as seemingly well-defined as certification would seem somewhat limited in its scope. As our study progressed, we came to realize that its effects are in fact wide-ranging and have a profound effect on the quality of life of many, if not most, people in Ontario. Its effects are often subtle and unrecognized.

The present forms of certification have developed over a long period of time and are very much related to two

of the more traditionally oriented institutions of our society — the university and the professions. But ours is a questioning society and traditional ways are no longer acceptable unless they can withstand the test of reason.

One theme emerged so consistently during the study that to state it now might serve as a useful orientation. As a society we seem obsessed with qualifications; we accept them uncritically as proof of competence and those who lack them are rejected or at least suspect, regardless of experience or personal qualities. Too little attention is paid to the actual requirements for a job. In effect, the symbols of certification have come to be accepted as the reality they supposedly represent. We shall see the consequences of this in terms of its impact on the individual, the educational system, and the community.

B. Definition

Certification takes many forms and a number of different concepts are subsumed under the general heading. For the purposes of this study, we have taken a broad definition of the term, considering it to be a process whereby society in some way gives public recognition to the successful attainment of requirements or qualifications specified as necessary for a particular occupation. Thus, certification includes the use of university degrees and diplomas when they are stipulated as a prerequisite for entry into

the occupational system; even a general arts degree can be considered in this light, although the undergraduate program associated with it is not expressly geared to job preparation.

As a generic term, certification also includes licensing and has itself a more precise meaning. The implications of these two particular concepts are well described by Anderson and Ertell:

> Licensing is a procedure designed to screen candidates for admission to a profession and, in some instances, to review periodically the qualifications of existing practitioners to assure minimum competence for the practice of the profession. As part of the licensing activity, there often is an attempt to establish ethical standards, to regulate the practice of the profession, to enhance the standards of the profession, and to ensure fair dealing with the public. Certification is a similar procedure. Its principal difference from licensing lies in the fact that it is often limited to the effort to assure minimum competence for the professional practice with considerably less attention devoted to the aspects of ethical standards or regulation of practice. While the term 'licensing' is ordinarily thought of in connection with the practice

> of the healing arts (physicians, dentists, osteopaths, nurses and others) and the term "certification" is used...to apply to teachers, accountants, architects, engineers, land surveyors, and others, the difference in terminology may be largely semantic in nature. ... In both licensing and certification the powers of this state are used to regulate admission to a profession. Standards for entrance, including education and experience, are established by law. On occasion, the law may grant to a board the power to establish the "rules and regulations" for licensure or certification. Applicants must meet these standards in order to practise and, in their practice, must conform to the provisions of the licensing law or the regulations of the certification board.[1]

In his discussion of licensing, Milton Friedman[2] emphasizes one important difference which the above quotation only implies. Certification, while recognizing that an individual has certain skills, does not make the practice

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[1] G. L. Anderson and M.W. Ertell, "Extra-Institutional Forces Affecting Professional Education", Education for the Professions, Part 2, N.B. Henry (ed.) (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962) 237-8.

[2] Milton Friedman, Capitalism & Freedom, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962) 144-5.

of those skills the exclusive right of certificate holders. Others may practise on condition that they do not claim the title conferred upon certificate holders. Licensure very clearly enforces, by law, the exclusive rights to practise of those who have been granted a licence.

In sociological terms, certification serves as a mechanism representing an important link or point of contact between two major systems in our society — the educational and occupational systems. It exerts a considerable influence on both systems, and, given existing forms of certification, that influence often impedes the effectiveness of both.

The significance of certification is in many ways symbolic. It indicates the successful completion of some initiation process, entitling the individual to claim his place as a member of an elite group within the society. As Slocum describes it, "Acceptance into a profession is normally gained only after compliance with rigorous requirements concerning education and training followed by 'rites of passage' including examinations, awarding of degrees, and, in some cases, licences to practice."[3] With the growing emphasis on educational requirements, the same is true for many occupations other than those normally classed as professions.

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[3]W.L. Slocum, Occupational Careers (Chicago, Aldine Publishing Co., 1966), 119.

In this paper the term "certification" will be used in the broad sense defined earlier in the chapter; thus, it will include the granting of university degrees, college diplomas, professional licences as well as certification in the more precise sense defined by Anderson and Ertell. Any exceptions to this usage will be clearly indicated.

CHAPTER II - THE NEED FOR CERTIFICATION

The emphasis on certification in our society is growing at a rapid rate. The universities and community colleges produce students with a bewildering array of degrees, diplomas and certificates; and more and more occupations are demanding proof of ever-higher levels of education. Basic job requirements seem to change with every generation: "There is almost no chance now for a person to rise to a high position without a college education. In the near future, college graduates will be so plentiful that graduate training may be as essential as undergraduate training is today."[4] *To understand the reasons for this change and to understand the role certification plays in the process, we should consider briefly some of the dramatic changes which have taken place in our society over the past several generations.*

A. The Legacy of Industrial Society

The Industrial Revolution brought with it a social structure and set of values which, in a matter of generations, effected more changes in western man's existence than had occurred in the previous two thousand years.

To support new methods of production, people were persuaded to leave the familiarity of rural and small-town

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[4] Ibid., 144.

communities and move to a more anonymous existence in major cities and towns. Mass production meant specialization and the tradesman and craftsman became workers on the assembly line, the lowest level of the newly created hierarchy.

As machine technology developed, the trend to specialization continued, with an increasing number of jobs at all levels of these new organizational structures.

With the economies of scale made possible by this technology, the size and complexity of business organizations grew to an extent previously unknown. The bureaucratic organization proved the answer to many of the problems of large-scale enterprise. A clearly defined hierarchy in the form of a pyramid consisting of a number of "roles", each with an assigned status, authority, and set of responsibilities, made it possible to predict and control the behaviour of employees.

New values were required for the successful functioning of this occupational system and its institutions. In the words of Talcott Parsons, they were: "...Scope for the valuation of personal achievement, for equality of opportunity, for mobility in response to technical requirements, for devotion to occupational goals and interests relatively unhampered by personal considerations. In more technical terms it requires a high incidence of technical competence, of rationality, of universalistic norms and of functional

specificity."[5]

B. Growth of Science

In the post-war years, progress in scientific endeavour has been phenomenal and it continues at an ever-accelerating rate. We are so accustomed to records that statements such as "the great majority of scientists who have ever lived, are alive today", do not have as great an impact on us as they might. Science and the scientific method have not only produced a wealth of knowledge; they are having a profound impact on the nature of the total society, the kinds of occupations open to us, the way we relate to one another, our perspective on the world in which we live, and, perhaps most significant of all, the way we view ourselves.

The major impact has been on the economic system. The quest for knowledge as an end in itself is no longer the main driving force behind scientific research. What was once the gentlemanly pursuit of scholars is now organized and financed by governments and private industries, whose prime concern is the practical application of scientific discovery. The success of these endeavours is evidenced by the complexity of products and processes which are now

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[5]Talcott Parsons, Essays in Sociological Theory, (New York, The Free Press, 1954), 191.

considered "essential" to the fabric of our society.

Social commentators such as Bell[6] describe society as moving into the "post-industrial" phase, characterized by applied science and technology. They see this post-industrial society dominated by professional and technical workers in a hierarchy which, even by comparison with the industrial structures, will be remarkable for its precise definition. Already the characteristics of this era are with us.

Theoretical knowledge is the cornerstone of this society. Its application means power:

> Ours is a society where knowledge counts. Those who know something and are able to put this knowledge to work influence us immensely. On a large scale, the development and organized employment of knowledge is a major feature of our social existence. It is incorporated in the social order of our society in two distinctive ways: both formally recognized professions and complex social organizations are suited to harnessing existing knowledge and bringing it to bear on specific problems. Both are also involved in the process of creating new knowledge.[7]

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[6]David Bell, Issues 6 & 7 of The Public Interest, 1967.

[7]Amitai Etzioni, The Semi-Professions and Their Organization, (New York, The Free Press, 1969), 55.

C. Change as a Way of Life

An ever-accelerating rate of change has come to be accepted as a feature of the post-industrial society. In the United States, the National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress reports evidence that "every step in the process of technological change has accelerated in the last 65 years. Total time from discovery to commercial application has shrunk from 30 to 14 years for basic technical innovations with another five years for full diffusion."[8]

The effects of this on the individual give rise to considerable and well-founded concern. It has produced a situation which is unique in the history of man. Even one generation ago, the rate of change was a gradual process seen from the time perspective of the individual. For this generation of students, however, there is no longer the assurance that their education and training will equip them for a life-long career.

The effects may be felt at all levels of society. The expanding use of computers and the introduction of automated manufacturing processes make redundant many a clerical worker and semi-skilled worker; before long, skilled workers and the lower levels of management will

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[8]The National Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress, Technology and the American Economy (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1966). Quoted in W.L. Slocum, Occupational Careers.

experience their effects. Although this is unlikely to result in the large-scale unemployment originally predicted, the personal upheaval of perhaps a period of unemployment and retraining or reorientation, is a problem not to be underestimated.

Professor R.H. Hall of McMaster University describes the effects of change on what he terms "the knowledge worker" in this way:

> The knowledge worker in the post-industrial age operates quite differently from his counterpart in the industrial age. The spectrum of knowledge that he possesses at any given time is constantly changing. Thus, such an individual may be doing one thing for a few years, but because of changes in his field, is soon involved in another type of activity. Consequently, such an individual needs to be adaptable, versatile and have the basic skills and motivation to continually learn new ways of doing things and applying this information. A premium is placed on the skills rather than on the specialized knowledge that he may possess at any given time.[9]

This combined with the sheer volume of information

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[9] Globe and Mail, June 2, 1970. Quoted in J. Porter et al, Towards 2000 (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1971), 101.

which research is producing -- "the information explosion" -- will make education a career-long experience for many. It is virtually impossible for any individual "knowledge worker" to keep himself current, except in his own particular specialty. Both graduate student and practising professional are confronted with a mass of research papers and texts, so that deciding what to read in itself becomes an overwhelming task. Organizations employing such people must be prepared to make arrangements for them to keep up to date on a regular basis. For scientists and other professionals, most are turning to the universities as the only places where such education can be obtained.

Psychologists view with concern man's ability to cope with this rate of change, because of the uncertainties it introduces into his existence, the continuing need to question social structures and even values. It is clear that, for many, learning to cope with change will be a painful and slow process; for some, perhaps impossible.

Many of our customs and ways of behaving towards one another and our environment developed over a period of centuries and have become so much a part of our way of life that, until very recently, there was no thought of questioning them -- this was the way things were.

Today we find that these traditional customs and values are in conflict with the new life styles which are being forced upon us and we are confronted with the

agonizing process of examining their validity; agonizing because until recently these were the very standards by which we judged the quality of our existence. Tradition and science meet in conflict, and even scientists find that their roots are still in the world of tradition. We are caught up in a system which no one seems able to control and which is forcing us to examine and reject many things on which we have depended for our sense of purpose and well-being.

Social scientists, themselves creatures of this new order, see abundant evidence of the impact these developments are having on our society. Our needs as individuals and as members of social groups have changed little since the dawn of our history. We still have a need for identity, a sense of worth or status, a feeling of belonging, and a sense of purpose to our existence.

In the past, these needs have never been too much of a problem; ways of life evolved over generations in response to an environment which in terms of an individual's life span, was more or less constant. The course of a man's life, in general terms, was set from the day of his birth. He inherited his place in society and the duties and privileges which fell to him had a "God-given" quality about them.

Today, for all but a few, this way of life has gone forever, and people are struggling to find a meaning for themselves in the system which changes with scant regard for human needs. In a sense we have to impose meaning for ourselves where none exists. Creatures of tradition, we are caught up in a scientific age which demands a rational, logical process but which ignores (or has ignored until recently) man as the most significant variable in the formula.

In the course of this study, we have found that certification is very much caught up in this process-- at one level as a part of the rational process itself and at another as one of the means by which man is trying to impose a significance on his environment.

D. Education in the "New Order"

Statistics on student enrolment in all forms of post-secondary education, together with budget figures for education, are evidence of the tremendous importance which our society, of necessity, places on the education of its members. For many, education is looked upon as the only means of successfully confronting the problems which we have just outlined. Individuals and institutions, each with their own perspective and set of priorities, look to education, and particularly post-secondary education, to

meet their own particular needs.

The level of education demanded of applicants by industry, the professions, and government is increasing with each generation of students. It is difficult to realize that before the turn of the century most professionals, including doctors and lawyers, finished their formal education in high school. The knowledge base required for professionals is now so complex that it is impossible to acquire the necessary understanding and skills through practical experience alone; most spend a minimum of five years in university.

The emphasis in post-secondary education has changed to cope with new demands and pressures. From its earliest days, part of the university's function has been occupational training, principally for the church. The other aspect of its teaching role has been the fostering of an interest in things intellectual and the development of responsible citizenship.

Today society is pressing the universities more and more into the role of training institutions for skilled manpower. Additions to university curricula over the past ten years bear witness to this. Engineering faculties flourish as do the commerce and business schools; in addition to new specialities in the physical and biological sciences, programs are offered in urban studies, computer science, communications, and many other occupation-oriented subjects.

Other post-secondary educational institutions, such as Ryerson and the colleges of applied arts and technology, are designed to meet very specific occupational training needs.

However, as the existence of this present Commission will testify, many changes are still required in the post-secondary education system if it is to meet the ever-growing demands made on it by Canadian society. New subjects are being taught, certainly, but still in the context of a traditionally derived framework, one aspect of which is the degree or diploma system. The present forms of the university degree have such a long and established tradition behind them that they have assumed a significance in their own right which distorts their true function. Only by considering what purposes they are intended to serve today can we assess their effectiveness.

E. The Functions of Certification

Sociologists have a somewhat precise way of defining the term "function". The distinction which they make between different types of function will serve a useful purpose in our analysis of certification. For the sociologist, any social mechanism or value is said to have a function if it contributes to the fulfilment of one or more of the social needs of a social system or subsystem. They make an important distinction between "manifest"

functions, which are those that are intended and recognized, and "latent" functions, which are unrecognized and not expressly intended.[10] In the remainder of this chapter we shall outline briefly the manifest functions of certification; in the chapters which follow we shall be considering the effectiveness of existing forms of certification in meeting their manifest functions and we shall consider, too, the latent functions which have been acquired.

1. A Convenient Form of Communication

Communication is the most general of the intended functions of certification, applying to all its existing forms. The diplomas, degrees, and certificates awarded a successful student provide a means whereby other members of the society can form an approximate assessment as to the nature and level of knowledge and skill possessed by that individual as a result of his educational experience. The need for such a shorthand form of communication has complex origins, stemming from a number of the developments which we noted have taken place in our society.

A growing interdependence among members of society, the development of science and technology, greater mobility and specialization have all contributed. An employer seeking new members of staff, educational institutions

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[10] See, for example, R.K. Merton's discussion in Social Theory and Social Structures: Codification of Theory and Research (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1957).

making admission or promotional decisions, and the individual looking for professional help all need to make decisions about individual capabilities.

In most instances, the decision-maker lacks knowledge in the specific area to make an accurate assessment for himself. Credentials in one form or another provide him with a means for making some approximate evaluation. In the case of a university degree, the employer or academic institution knows that the individual concerned has completed a certain course of study and was considered to have shown some mastery of the subjects covered. For the individual seeking professional help, a doctor's or lawyer's possession of a licence provides him with the assurance that the appropriate professional body is satisfied that this individual has acquired a sufficiently high level of competence to practise effectively in that field.

In some instances the qualification carries a greater information load, as, for example, when it makes the distinction between honours or a pass degree. The reputation of the institution awarding the qualification will in many cases add strong value overtones to the degree itself; in the United States, for example, a degree from Harvard University is likely to be viewed more (or perhaps less) favourably by some than a similar degree from other institutions.

2. Protection for the Society

In our earlier discussion we have stressed the power which knowledge brings to an individual in our society. In the case of certain occupational groups this has a particular significance. In the Province of Ontario, 22 professions and occupations have been given the right to self-government which entitles them to the powers of licensing and certification defined in Chapter I.[11]

The justification for this action is always that it be in the interests of the public. The Committee on the Healing Arts emphasized that: "It is a grant by the sovereign legislative authority, representing society, to a licensing body, owing its existence to an act of legislature, to permit it to exercise its powers conferred for the protection of the public against incompetent or dishonest practitioners. These powers must be exercised by the licensing body as a trustee, not for the practitioner but for the public."[12]

A number of important assumptions are made about the nature of a profession and the service it provides, which give rise to this delegation of power. We quote here from an article by Howard Becker:

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[11] See Appendix A, 92.

[12] Report of the Committee on the Healing Arts, Vol. 3, 51.

> In the first place, it is supposed that only the most able people will have the mental ability and the proper temperament to absorb and use such knowledge, therefore, recruitment must be strictly controlled to ensure that those who are not qualified do not become members of the profession.... Entrance into professional practice has to be strictly controlled and this control must ultimately lie in the hands of the members of the profession itself. Difficult obstacles in the form of examinations of all kinds, must be surmounted by candidates for practice, and no one must be allowed to practise who has not so demonstrated his competence. This means that police power of the state must be utilized through the device of licensure procedures to control entrance into practice. Finally, since recruitment, training and entrance into practice are all carefully controlled, any member of the professional group can be thought of as fully competent to supply the professional service.[13]

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[13] H.S. Becker, "The Nature of a Profession", in Education for the Professions, N.B. Henry (Ed.), Part 2 (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1962), 36.

CHAPTER III - A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We turn now to a consideration of licensing and certification in its more closely defined sense. In Chapter II, we saw that the principal justification for this type of exclusive credential system is to ensure that the public is well served by those occupations covered by this system. If the mechanisms of certification/licensing are to be successful in this regard, a number of conditions must be met in the certification procedures and it is our purpose in this chapter to examine these conditions and show, by reference to existing forms of certification in the province, the problems and solutions associated with them.

A. PROTECTING THE CONSUMER

As has often been stressed, the self-regulating professions receive their right to self-government, and thereby to control licensing of practitioners, for one purpose alone--the protection of the public against "incompetent or dishonest practitioners".

A number of factors would seem to play a significant part in determining how effectively this objective is met.

1. Composition of Certification Boards

Bearing in mind our present frame of reference--

certification as a means of protecting the interests of the society--the composition of certification boards is a particularly important issue. These are the people who decide the requirements and standards for certification and licensing and whose delegated responsibility it is to ensure that these mechanisms provide the consumer with the protection the government wishes to guarantee. Clearly the boards should be capable of assessing the relevance of certification or licensing requirements; they should appreciate what standards are required and there should be some way of ensuring that they are acting in the interests of the public, not the professional group itself. The question of representation has, in the past, centred around a number of factors internal to the occupational group itself.

Considering that it was to this body that the government delegated the responsibility for the public interest, the greatest weakness lies in the fact that it is also the body of the association which represents the interests of the professional practitioners themselves. This state of affairs came in for much criticism from the Committee on the Healing Arts and, acting on their recommendation, the Minister of Health has stated that the two bodies should be legally and functionally separate. In a series of guiding principles set out in

January 1971, the Minister stated that:

> There should be regulatory bodies for all established health disciplines. The main concern of the regulatory bodies should be the interest of the public. The functions of the regulatory bodies should include the licensing, certifying, regulating and disciplining of its members. The regulatory body must be independent of any voluntary association established by any health discipline, e.g. professional association, union, or trade association. For even though such voluntary associations have a concern for the public welfare, nevertheless the legal and functional independence must be complete. Under no circumstances should a voluntary association be associated in a corporate way, directly or indirectly with a regulatory body.[14]

The other internal issue concerns the relative strength of representation from the academic and the practising members of a profession. From the consumer's

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[14] Hon. Thomas L. Wells, "Guiding Principles for the Regulation and the Education of the Health Disciplines", text of a speech delivered January, 1971.

point of view, the interest here is to ensure that those who practise and those who teach maintain a dialogue which will ensure the relevance of academic instruction to the needs of patients or clients. At the same time it must see that the requirements for practice keep pace with new developments in the relevant disciplines. On this point the present situation, certainly for the medical professions, seems quite acceptable.

Those with first-hand experience should, at this point, have a significant influence in determining who is qualified for professional practice.

It is important, however, that there should be a significant faculty representation. The universities have been given an increasingly independent role in determining the curricula for students who will enter the various professions. (This is as true for accountants and engineers as it is for the medical profession). Furthermore, it is in the universities that the latest theories and techniques are developed. Without the influence of academics within the profession, there would probably be an inevitable tendency to maintain the status quo, in part because of lack of knowledge of the practitioners and in part because of an understandable tendency to resist changes which might hasten their obsolescence.

At present, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, the licensing body for the medical profession, is made up of 12 members elected by the profession, and five others representing each of the medical faculties in the province.

One of the most significant developments in the whole question of certification and licensing is the idea of lay representation on the certification boards. If this whole process is dedicated to the protection of the public interest, it seems eminently reasonable that at least some members of these boards should be able to present the public's point of view without the danger of what might be a conflict of interest. It represents a step away from the situation described by Milton Friedman who believes that "certification, or licensure, almost inevitably becomes a tool in the hands of a special producer group to obtain a monopoly position at the expense of the rest of the public."[15]

On the recommendation of the Committee on the Healing Arts, the Minister of Health has stated that "the role of the public in the regulation of the Health disciplines should be recognized by having a significant number of members of the colleges and divisions (i.e. the certification bodies) who are not engaged in the health field. Such members should be

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[15]Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, 148.

appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council for a term of office of three years, renewable for a further term of three years."[16]

Currently the College of Physicians and Surgeons is considering the appointment of three such representatives, although the criteria for appointment have yet to be decided.

At the present time, the Ontario Psychological Association is giving consideration to revised legislation to replace the Psychologists Registration Act and they have given much thought to the question of lay representatives. They propose the creation of a self-governing body, a "College of Psychology", similar to organizations of psychologists in other provinces and to organizations of other disciplines within the province. The governing body of the College would be a Council, and in their deliberations as to the composition of the Council, the question of outside representation is being considered. It is suggested that the Council be made up of 18 members elected by the psychologists of the province, and one representative from each university psychology department authorized to grant doctoral degrees.

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[16] Ibid.

Their approach to lay representation is set out as follows: "In recognition of the need to have community interest presented in the deliberations of the College, attention was given to meaningful lay representation. Psychologists work in many areas of application and research in the public sector, and it was thought that representation through appropriate Ministers of Government would assist in meeting this need...."[17] It was suggested, therefore, that one member should be appointed by each of the ministers of Correctional Services, Education, Health, Justice, Labour, and Social and Family Services. These representatives, they believe, need not be psychologists. In addition, it is proposed to have one lay representative to be recommended by an organization such as the Ontario Federation of Labour.

Although decision-making in a group representing such diverse points of view would be that much more difficult, at least a forum would exist to ensure that the interests of the lay public were well represented.

The question of tenure of office for members of certification boards is a more pertinent one, not only for lay representatives. To ensure a maximum flexibility

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[17] "Proposed New Legislation Governing Psychology", Draft dated December 15, 1970, and circulated to members of the profession.

and openness to change, the three-year period of office with an optional renewal of three years might well be applied to the professional and academic members of the boards.

The prime responsibility for safeguarding the public interest lies with the government and, in recognizing this principle, the government proposes setting up a Health Disciplines Regulation Board to be responsible to the Minister of Health for the regulation of each health discipline, and "the co-ordination of all such regulations--based on the relevant health policies, health legislation."[18] The powers of this body would, in fact, be far-reaching. It would work through the existing Colleges of Physicians, Dentists, Nurses, Pharmacists and Optometrists, and these would remain essentially self-regulatory bodies. For the other health disciplines, a division would be set up with responsibility for the regulation of one or more related disciplines.

The Colleges and divisions would be responsible for "regulations", including the licensure and/or certification of practitioners, for the standards of licensure and/or certification and for the discipline of the members where required.

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[18]Hon. Thomas L. Wells, "Guiding Principles for the Regulation and the Education of the Health Disciplines".

However--and herein would lie its real power--the proposed Health Disciplines Regulation Board would be responsible for determining the general composition and mode of selection of membership of the colleges and divisions.

The board itself, the Minister suggests, should be a lay board, "small in size (five to seven persons), composed of part-time members outside the Government service appointed on a rotating basis for a three-year term, renewable once. It should have its own full-time staff. The Lieutenant Governor in Council should appoint a chairman and members of the Board."[19]

As a co-ordinating body, such a Board would play a valuable role in ensuring the consistency of requirements among the various health disciplines. It would also provide a partial solution to the problems of "right of appeal" to an impartial court for those refused entry to a profession, and rigidity of requirements which prevents mobility between related health disciplines. Both problems will be discussed at greater length in later sections.

2. Relevant Requirements for Certification

Certainly the most obvious issue in the whole process of licensing and certification must be the relevance of the requirements demanded of an aspiring

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[19] Ibid.

practitioner. As noted above, the assumption underlying licensing is that any member of the professional group is able to provide a fully competent professional service. Effective control of admission would seem to be the way any regulating body can make its greatest impact on the quality of the profession as a whole. In speaking of teacher education, Kinney describes certification as the primary safeguard for the quality of the educational program. It is, he says, "an instrument for direct action by the public when it undertakes to improve the educational program."[20]

Certainly licences can be revoked for incompetence or unethical behaviour, but professional incompetence is difficult to define, much less prove. This, combined with understandable reluctance to take away the livelihood of a colleague, makes such a method of control particularly ineffective. The Committee on the Healing Arts believes that the professions have in fact failed to control incompetency after the point of admission to the profession.[21] In a recent article in the Globe and Mail, A. M. Linden claimed that:

> The malpractice action, therefore, is not as great a threat to the medical profession in

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[20] Kinney, Certification and Education, 2.

[21] Report of the Committee on the Healing Arts, Vol. 3, 29 - 31.

> Canada as some may think. Indeed, the Ontario Committee on the Healing Arts dismissed it as almost useless in controlling the quality of medical practice. This is a problem when it is coupled with the impotence of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, which cannot cancel a physician's licence without a showing of professional misconduct or incompetence. A doctor cannot be expelled from his profession for mere carelessness...[22]

If standards are to be maintained, the point of entry, it would seem, is the place for action. Mr. Justice McRuer said in his report that the power to license carries with it the following responsibilities: "setting educational standards, standards of technical competence, ethical and character requirements."[23] It is along these dimensions that we shall examine licensing and certification requirements from the standpoint of ensuring consumer protection.

a) Educational Standards

It is not our intention at this point to embark on a detailed consideration of curricula; rather, we are concerned to see that influences or mechanisms exist

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[22] A. M. Linden, "When the Doctor is at Fault", Globe & Mail, May 22, 1971.

[23] Royal Commission, Inquiry into Civil Rights, Vol. 3, 1165.

to ensure that relevance and competence to practise are taken into account in determining academic programs. In effect we are looking beyond the degree and asking what it really represents.

The importance of academic preparation in this regard is clearly stated in the responsibilities of the General Medical Council in England: "The general duty of the Council is to protect the public in particular by supervising and improving medical education".[24] The current trend in Ontario is for academics to have greater control in determining courses offered. The Council of Deans of Medical Schools in Ontario, for example, stated in their submission to this Commission that: "... the control of admissions and curriculum in bona fide provincially chartered universities should reside with the institution, providing that licensing requirements are met by graduates".[25] They do, however, stress that a regulating body such as the College of Physicians and Surgeons is essential to establish minimum standards of practice, regulate licensure, and ensure public protection from exploitation by the profession.

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[24] Quoted by McRuer, Ibid., Vol. 3, 1162.

[25] "The Role of the Medical School in Health Science Education", Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario, Submission No. 114, January 18, 1971, 6.

Similar views regarding the control of education by the universities are expressed in briefs to this Commission by the Institute of Chartered Accountants and the Institute of Canadian Bankers, although the motivation of the newer and aspiring professional groups may have strong prestige overtones attached.

Essentially, supporters of the idea put forward two arguments to support their case.

1. Only university people are sufficiently familiar with the advances in the state of the science to give students the exposure to latest theories and the techniques.
2. An educational system more tightly controlled by the professional body would be resistant to change, in part through lack of knowledge and in part to protect its established members from obsolescence.

Nobody seems to argue with the first point; only those able to devote a substantial part of their time to research and study can hope to stay sufficiently well-informed to teach the next generation of practitioners.

The Committee of Presidents of Universities of Ontario are sceptical on the second point. They feel that the professions are less resistant to change than the academic community, because of the academics'

"failure to recognize the problems of a changing society and the stubborn insistence on scholastic achievement at the expense of professional relevance."[26]

This control of professional education by the universities inevitably raises the further question as to whether academics are sufficiently in touch with requirements for a practitioner. Concern has been expressed that curricula will become too esoteric and academic in their orientation. Opinions differ on this point and we shall cite two opposing views to illustrate some of the major issues involved.

(i) Medicine

The Committee on the Healing Arts feels that adequate safeguards exist to protect medical education from the dangers of an over-academic approach. Schools offering programs in medical education are accredited by outside agencies and their programs evaluated and criticized. The Council of Medical Deans describes the procedure:

> ... a review of each school's operations at ten yearly and more recently five yearly intervals by a team of external experts who have the right to recommend approval or withdrawal of accreditation of a school. The predominantly Canadian

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26 John Porter, et al. Towards 2000, 91.

> team is composed of representatives from the Association of Canadian Medical Colleges and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, which itself is a joint committee of the Association of American Medical Colleges and the American Medical Association. This international committee has helped to establish uniform standards in North American Institutions....[27]

Other safeguards are found in the need for graduates to pass outside examinations for certification and also in the fact that many faculty members are also practitioners.

Undoubtedly the changing objective of undergraduate medical programs has become a consideration in this question. A recent Royal Commission in the United Kingdom stated that the medical graduate should no longer be considered ready to practise. The training he receives today is not designed to produce the "safe doctor". Rather, the purpose should be to provide a basic medical education with postgraduate training a necessity for all who intend to practise medicine: "the aim must now be to produce at registration the basic graduate who only, with further supervised vocational training in the branch of medicine of his choice, can acquire the skills necessary for fully independent practice."[28]

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[27] Quoted in "The Role of the Medical School in Health Science Education," Submission No. 114, 6.

[28] Ibid., 5.

(ii) Engineering

The Association of Professional Engineers in the province are less satisfied as to the relevance of academic programs for the student who wishes to practise; undoubtedly they are anxious to improve the somewhat unfortunate image which the profession feels it has acquired regarding its awareness of social issues.

They deal at some length with the question of relevance and social responsibility in briefs to the Committee of Presidents of Universities of Ontario and to this Commission. Pointing to the limited practical industrial experience of engineering professors, they make the following recommendation for cross-appointments between university and industry or private consulting: "We feel that both universities and industry should recognize this activity as part of the career structure of their senior staff, and joint appointments should be increased as far as possible. We should hope that in time there would be at least one joint appointment in each department, certainly in those relevant to industry."[29]

They express great concern that "such professional matters as legislation, organization of the profession, code of ethics, rules of practice, economics, employment

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[29] Ring of Iron: A Study of Engineering Education in Ontario. A Report to the Committee of Presidents of Universities of Ontario, December 1970, 30.

practices, responsibilities and obligations, and independent practice have not been considered worthy of inclusion in the system of curriculum."[30] They feel that too many engineering professors show little concern for the profession, citing the low registration in the professional association as evidence of this lack of involvement. This, they claim, ranges between 20 and 50 per cent of total faculty, according to university.

They believe that continuing practice should be considered a duty for the faculty member, not a privilege. Lack of exposure to practical experience, they feel, leads to a situation where "engineering professors, for example, are usually interested in turning out men with skills, appropriate for teachers of engineering. They simply take it for granted that these skills will also be appropriate to the practice of engineering. In many cases, of course, they are right, but in many cases, they are probably wrong."[31]

In fairness to faculty (and this applies to more than engineers), it should be pointed out that this demand for practical experience presents what must be for some a frustrating dilemma. Academics who engage in any activity other than teaching are accused of neglecting their students, and this complaint applies

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[30]The Association of Professional Engineers of the Province of Ontario, Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario, Submission No. 25, 6.

[31]Ibid., 7.

to other professions as well as to engineering. Perhaps the recommendation to give formal recognition to the value of practical experience as it affects the students would do much to resolve this dilemma.

In an article devoted to the nature of professions, Howard Becker presents a perceptive analysis of what is perhaps the major cause of irrelevant academic training. He contrasts the realities of professional organization and practice with what he terms the "symbol" of a profession. The symbol represents the ideal code of behaviour, organizational structure and interaction patterns for those occupations generally termed professions. He feels that the symbol systematically ignores so many features of occupational life that it is unable to provide an adequate guide for professional activity. It is particularly unfortunate that professional education is more oriented to the symbol than the reality and "so fails to prepare its students for the world they will have to work in."[32]

b) Technical Competence

Another approach to the question of increasing the relevance of professional training is to ensure that programs leading up to certification include the opportunity for significant practical experience.

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[32] H. S. Becker, "The Nature of a Profession" in Education for the Professions, N. B. Henry (ed.) (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1962), 46.

In all of the university trained professions, some form of practical experience is required as a condition of licensing. This does not necessarily take place within the context, or under the guidance, of the educational institution. At the present time, the value of this experience is subject to considerable variation, both between and within professions. The degree of control exercised by the university or the professional association would seem a critical determinant of the quality of experience gained.

In the case of medicine, academic training now forms such an important part of the doctor's education that it comes as somewhat of a surprise to realize that prior to the Flexner Report of 1910, all medical education was of the apprenticeship variety. For obvious reasons the medical profession still attaches great importance to practical training, a point of view endorsed by the Committee on the Healing Arts, which recommended:

> That the accreditation of hospitals for internship programs should be carried out on the national basis by the Association of Medical Colleges, but that if this is not possible, accreditation should be under the auspices of the Council of Deans of

> Ontario Faculties of Medicine. At the same time, the Committee recommends that the Medical Schools could continue to control the internship experience as an integral part of the overall education process.[33]

The Committee also recommended that the experience opportunities for both undergraduate and postgraduate students should be extended by accrediting, for internship purposes, both group practices and community health centres.[34]

The value of practical experience in community centres was stressed by Dean J. R. Evans of McMaster University, who feels that it would be desirable to have a greater proportion of clinical experience in community centres as opposed to hospitals. He suggests, too, that efforts should be made to "establish this type of education for all members of the health profession in the same setting rather than in separate settings."[35]

Outside the health disciplines, practical experience required for certain vocations is much less controlled by either the educational institution or the professional association. In general, the stated

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[33] Report of the Committee on the Healing Arts, No. 8, 15.

[34] Ibid., No. 10, 16.

[35] Personal correspondence, August 11, 1971.

requirement is one or two years of experience "acceptable to the examining board."

Various proposals have been put forward to make this a period of practical experience and a more relevant prerequisite for entry into the profession. The Association of Professional Engineers believe that an applicant for admission to the profession:

> ...should acquire the equivalent of two years of acceptable engineering experience as a graduate engineer in training, during which period he would be exposed to an environment that encourages the development of professional functions, responsibility, maturity and judgement. If the profession is to discharge its responsibility, then it must be satisfied that the applicant will enter professional practice having due regard for the public interest. Each graduate engineer in training should prepare a short structured dissertation on his experience, which, if satisfactory, would entitle him to sit for a final examination in professional practice set and administered by the profession. In this way, universities would not be the sole arbiter and the profession would be satisfied that all its

> members have developed an awareness of its responsibilities and obligations as practising engineers.[36]

Job openings which would provide this kind of "acceptable experience" may be limited in number. A student who is unfortunate in his choice of job could be unfairly disadvantaged as a result. However, as an ideal it is certainly something to be striven for.

A practical and seemingly very successful alternative exists in the co-operative programs developed at the University of Waterloo. Here engineers, mathematicians, chemists and, at the graduate level, psychologists alternate periods of academic work with practical experience. For the undergraduate engineer, the degree course covers almost five calendar years, comprising eight terms, each of about four months duration of the university work on the campus, pursued alternatively with six four-month terms of organized and supervised training in engineering practice. The university calendar describes the purpose of the program:

> The co-operative course brings a student into direct contact with the engineering profession and exposes him to problems typical of those encountered in practice.

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[36] Ring of Iron, 34.

> Students are introduced to full-scale engineering projects and installations, far beyond the scope of any university laboratory.... Through directed experience in industry, the student's educational environment is extended and his total education advanced. It provides the maturing prospective engineer with an opportunity for self-discipline and direction, and allows early appreciation of the social and personal aspects of engineering through direct association with a technological environment.[37]

The Committee of University Presidents suggested that one way of combatting the danger of lack of relevance could be by "developing diverse forms of interaction between the educational system and the outside world...."[38]

A suggestion by Walter Pitman, in his submission to this Commission, has particular appeal in this regard.[39] He considers the question of practical experience for teachers in training and suggests associating an entire school system with a university. In this way, teachers

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[37]University of Waterloo Calendar, The Co-operative Engineering Course.

[38]John Porter, et al, Towards 2000, 83.

[39]Walter Pitman, (M.P.P. Peterborough), Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario, Submission No. 79.

would be able to work for their degrees and at the same time become involved with the school system, working with, and learning from, those already qualified. This would also serve as a means of countering the fears that incorporating teacher-training colleges into the universities will take the students even further from the world in which they will eventually work. Students would, in this way, have the opportunity to become involved in the life of the local community in a meaningful way.

c) Ethical and Character Requirements

All professions insist that applicants for admission be "of good character". However, little progress has been made in defining what constitutes "good character" as far as the professions are concerned. Selection committees and certification boards have long agonized over this problem. Professor Rendall of the Faculty of Law at the University of Western Ontario sums up the dilemma this way:

> It would certainly be arguable that the Admissions Committee should try and conjecture a profile of desirable personality traits in prospective lawyers and take into consideration any factors that might indicate integrity, compassion, leadership, dedication to

> public service, and other desirable qualities... any statement of the desirable characteristics would be highly personal and an attempt to use such a system of assessment would involve a very undesirable degree of subjectivity.[40]

Undoubtedly the problems involved are immense. Personality assessment under any circumstances is notoriously subject to the personal bias of the evaluators and, for the professional schools, the number of applicants is in itself a formidable obstacle to any intensive screening. Various selection methods have been tried with no real indication of success. The dental faculties in the province use a dental aptitude test, which they are coming to feel is of limited value.[41] Consideration is being given at the moment to arranging interviews with each candidate, although the detailed terms of reference for these interviews have yet to be established.

The medical school at McMaster University is currently experimenting with a selection program which

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[40]Personal correspondence, August 23, 1971.

[41]Personal correspondence to Applied Research Associates from K. F. Pownell, Registrar, Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

lays heavy emphasis on personal qualities. In addition to the basic level of academic achievement, they obtain information about applicants from personal references, an essay written by the individual himself and, in some cases, by personal interviews. As yet, no information is available on the predictive validity of their method.

Professional groups place great emphasis on the ideals of service and the personal integrity of their members; they are being trained for positions in which the ability to make independent decisions, often on matters of great personal consequence to their clients, is essential. In these circumstances, it is to be hoped that a determined effort will be made to establish ways of reducing the number of individuals unsuited for a practice. The growing awareness of the complexities and problems faced by our society, and the role which will be expected by the professions coping with these problems, makes the matter all the more relevant.

3. Continuing Education and Relicensing

The need for the continuing education is generally accepted and, for the most part, both the professions and teaching institutions accept the need for some form of requalification.

In dealing with their own profession, the engineers highlight many of the problems common to all professions.

They feel strongly that requalification is an obligation:

> Since accountability is the hallmark of any profession, surely there is reason for insisting that its members maintain and enhance their ability to account to society for their actions. The dynamism of tomorrow's technology will soon render today's techniques obsolete. The half-life of the content of the present engineering curriculum is no more than five years and so there is a compelling need for the continuing education of the engineer, together with a requalification process. In this way, assurance can be given to those served by the profession that it intends to fulfil its obligation to the society.[42]

The problems of setting up such a program are enormous. To accept the engineer's recommendation that formal courses of study be undertaken every five years would mean that "in 1969-70 about 4,000 graduate engineers would require requalification in Ontario, as compared with the total, full-time equivalent of undergraduate enrolment of 8,226.[43]

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[42] Ring of Iron, 34.

[43] John Porter, et al, Toward 2000, 90.

Obviously, the most pressing need in setting up such retraining programs would be for financing. Already the Province's education budget is causing concern as future demands for higher education are calculated. If these programs are to be instituted the burden for payment may well have to be borne by employers and the individuals concerned. Not all engineers would wish or need to continue taking retraining programs every five years. Many move into administrative or management positions leaving the more technical aspects of engineering to junior engineers probably less than ten years out of school.

The Council of Medical Deans points to the steps which have been taken by various medical bodies to ensure that their members keep current with the latest developments in their field. The most formalized of these is a requirement by the College of Family Physicians of Canada that their members produce evidence of 100 hours' study every two years. Their continuing membership in the body is conditional upon this requirement.

Other steps are less formalized. One of the objectives of undergraduate education in medicine is said to be to develop habits of independent study which the graduate will carry with him through his professional life. In addition, some of the general medical

specialities have developed methods which enable their practitioners to assess for themselves the currency of their education.

While endorsing relicensing in principle, the Medical Deans in Ontario are hesitant because of the practical obstacles involved, particularly as regards methods of evaluation. Certainly it would be unreasonable to expect a physician to prove his competence in fields other than his own specialty.

Some very real advantages would accrue from bringing together members of a profession in a learning environment at regular intervals throughout their careers. This would provide a unique opportunity for them to discuss in an informal setting, specifically oriented to study, the social issues as well as technical problems facing them in their own work environment.

For many, the alternatives to continuing education on an organized and systematic basis may be depressing indeed. It is possible that some, particularly those in the scientific and technological fields, may face what would be equivalent to de facto demotion, as employers in their anxiety to keep ahead promote recent graduates more familiar with the latest techniques and processes. One might, in fact, see a reverse of the seniority rule.

4. Evaluation Procedures

No matter how appropriate the curricula, or how relevant the practical experience of a student, if the evaluation processes which he must pass through to gain entry into his occupation are inappropriate, the whole process is invalidated. The Commission has justly recognized the importance of evaluation by devoting a special study to the rationale and methodology used in our educational system.

In this paper we shall be concerned only with pointing to some of the weaknesses in existing systems.

It would be unfortunate indeed if the evaluation process itself were to be discriminatory by preventing individuals from obtaining qualifications for no reason other than their inability to cope with a particular type of evaluation process. Dean J. R. Evans has expressed concern on this point regarding the kind of examinations used in the medical profession:

> Certification in these areas probably does represent in a high degree an assessment of a reasonable level of professional competence. It should be pointed out, however, that this assurance is only in relation to the effectiveness of an examination procedure in measuring something like professional competence.

> I think that it is lack of skills with the certifying examination process rather than any other type of discrimination which tends to exclude certain individuals from certain levels of the professions. The examination is a crude testing instrument for the purpose.[44]

A similar concern was expressed in a brief to the Commission. Citing the high failure rate of candidates in post-graduate medical examination, R. M. MacIntosh suggests that the fault may lie in the examination procedure. Each year the actual failure rate of the candidates averages about 55 per cent overall. In view of the fact that all candidates have successfully completed undergraduate medical programs and, furthermore, eventually pass the specialist examinations, the author suggests the most likely reason for this failure rate is that the procedure employed for testing candidates "is not an examination procedure but a rationing procedure." He suggests examining "the feasibility of requiring the examining bodies to apply periodic test performance during postgraduate medical studies rather than judging performance on the outcome of a final, single, examination."[45]

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[44] Personal correspondence, August 11, 1971.

[45] R. M. MacIntosh, "The Certification of Medical Specialists in Ontario," Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario, Submission No. 229.

The authors of this study feel very strongly that, unless the objectives of evaluation systems in educational institutions are carefully formulated and more appropriate procedures validated, many other recommendations which the Commission might make will be in vain.

No matter how carefully educational programs are designed and how well they are taught, if students are evaluated using methods which, for example, favour memory over judgement or cause them to fail because of the emotional stress of an examination, the educational system is unjust and ineffective.

B. DEVELOPING CITIZEN LEADERS

> Because the culture of the future will be based on science and technology, and because experts trained in these areas play key roles, it will be more essential than ever to strengthen the traditional disciplines which concern themselves with moral and aesthetic values. The value choices which become available with a greatly expanded scientific capacity are more numerous and more difficult to make.[46]

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[46] John Porter, et al, Towards 2000.

To a certain degree, we see in the university of today a swing towards one of the more traditional functions of the university. In response to the demands of technology, the 1950s saw the job-training aspect of education come to the fore. Current changes in society, partly as a result of the application of this technology, have produced an unparalleled level of uncertainty and concern about values and social responsibilities.

Members of the professions, who--with good reason--see themselves as leaders or at least influential members of this new society, now place considerable emphasis on social awareness and community leadership in the ideal requirements for their practitioners.

The need for professional competence in the more technical sense is still the pressing concern of the professional school itself. As a result there is a tendency to look to pre-professional post-secondary education to provide the students with a grounding in the humanities and social sciences.

In discussing pre-professional education for lawyers, it was suggested to us that: "pre-professional education has that importance which is common to all forms of education which is unrelated or peripherally related, to the matter of professional education. In this

respect, it is at least as important for members of the legal profession to have those liberalizing and civilising experiences and influences which are thought classically to inhere in this kind of education (liberal arts), as it is for any others among our citizenry...."[47]

The need for informed leadership has never been greater and both the universities and the professions have a responsibility to the community to ensure that practitioners and researchers alike will receive an education which will permit them to evaluate responsibly the issues of the day. A social conscience is perhaps the single most important attribute of any professional today.

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[47]Professor James A. Rendall, personal correspondence, August 23, 1971.

CHAPTER IV - EFFECTIVENESS OF COMMUNICATION

In an article largely devoted to an attack on our present system of credentials, Ralph Duncan concedes that there can be "no doubt that any large, complex society will always require commonly accepted meaningful measures of attainment."[48]

But just how effective are the existing forms of certification in communicating a meaningful picture of an individual's achievements and capabilities to potential employers? Like most other forms of communication, they seem prone to distortion which can result from any of a number of factors.

To appreciate the value of any qualification, an employer must have at least an approximate idea of the educational experience it represents--courses taken, methods of assessment and perhaps some knowledge of the institution itself. All too often they have but the haziest knowledge of any of these factors. From a communication point of view, a degree carries a maximum message to an employer when he is looking for capability in some field in which he himself is qualified; in these circumstances he may well be able to deduce fairly accurately subject mastery, the amount of effort required to obtain the degree, and perhaps even the graduate's orientation to his subject.

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[48] Ralph A. Duncan "Higher Education: The Effort to Adjust," Daedalus, Volume 99, Winter 1970, 141.

However, more typically, an employer does not specify any particular degree; he is looking for evidence of more general qualities--often of a personality rather than an academic nature. In recruiting on university campuses, executives are trying to identify future executives for their organizations--the degree itself may be of marginal significance and might be in English or Physics. In their brief to the Commission, the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario suggested employers look to the degree as an indication of such qualities as:

- a measure of personal determination and ambition;
- a measure of perseverance, dedication and endurance;
- a minimum native intelligence level;
- potential for growth and development.[49]

The validity of a university degree as a measure of these qualities is indeed questionable. We have noted that there are many motivations for attending university, and by no means all these give evidence of the qualities listed above. Nor does the educational experience of many students develop in them such desirable qualities; for many, the university is an extension of high school, forced on them by social pressures or the simple need to obtain a qualification for employment. By implication, the assumption is made that those who have not obtained a

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[49]Brief of the Association of Professional Engineers of Ontario. Submission No. 26, 7.

university degree are less likely to possess these qualities; the evidence has yet to be shown.

Surprisingly, in view of the tremendous importance we attach to university degrees as indicators of ability, virtually no systematic studies have been carried out to investigate the relationship between level of education and subsequent job performance. Even in the United States where industrial psychologists have looked at many different predictions of job success, Ivar Berg found that the only significant work done in this field was carried out by the public service, notably the armed forces. These studies indicate that "years of education are:

a) only moderately related to objective measures of aptitude;

b) a poor predicator of success in training; and

c) almost unrelated to objective measures of proficiency on the job..."[50]

Although these studies were carried out with a variety of both technical and administrative jobs it would be wrong to generalize their findings to other occupational spheres. Suffice it to say that, for want of evidence, employers have no assurance that the degrees they are using as indicators of ability are reliable decision criteria.

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[50] Ivar Berg, Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery (New York, Praeger, 1970).

One thing which the degree should communicate to an employer is the increased level of expectation, in terms of salary and position, which usually accompanies it. In their desire to obtain the best possible talent, employers overlook the possibility that there may be an optimum range of talent for the kind of jobs available within their organization. Studies by sociologists and psychologists in industry indicate that where the graduates' expectations do not coincide with reality, dissatisfaction--expressed in terms of low productivity or high turnover-- is sure to result.

Certainly employers cannot be blamed for using what on the surface would seem to be the most logical way to screen candidates. Often large companies are faced with more applicants than they can possibly assess on an individual basis and, in the absence of better screening methods, educational qualifications are likely to be the most typical way of reducing numbers to more manageable proportions. Given the lack of study into this whole question, the only guaranteed piece of information communicated by the degree may well be the number of years spent at university or college.

The problem of making comparative judgements between similar qualifications from different institutions is in itself intimidating, given the different methods of teaching,

evaluation methods, and the calibre of students in the institution, or even the particular class. (This latter point assumes a particular significance in those courses where instructors impose a normal distribution curve on marks to establish cut-off points for grading).

Often the general reputation of the university serves as the second most important decision criterion and reputations may depend on factors quite unrelated to the particular student's educational experience.

Qualifications awarded by new institutions or for new types of programs face particular problems in gaining acceptance--a situation in which colleges of applied arts and technology find themselves.[51]

If employers have, as has been suggested, contributed to the overemphasis on qualifications, the situation is not one for which they are entirely responsible. Lacking other more reliable means of evaluating potential employees, they have been forced to accept the assessments provided by universities. Ralph Duncan feels the fault lies more with the universities:

> The employer has, out of convenience or the absence of a more valid screening method, taken his cue from the universities. If the latter were to start offering a range of credentials that made

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[51] See, for example, untitled submission No. 83 to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario by R. Bisson from Northern College of Applied Arts and Technology.

> more sense, the former might be forced to respond accordingly. The employer will always seek those who appear to be the best candidates, but his reliance on irrelevant paper credentials would fade if other credentials were made more relevant.[52]

Essentially the certification process has failed to keep pace with the changing expectations of university education. Many of the current forms of certification date from a time when university education was an experience reserved for the privileged few and in that context the role of the degree was less significant from a job point of view. Today, students and employers look upon the university as a training ground for specific occupations, or as a means of developing intellectual and other skills which will be of general benefit to career development.

Methods of certification have failed to keep pace with this new dimension and the old degree requirements often dominate the courses of study available to students not only in terms of actual content, but in time constraints and methods of instruction.

Some of the newer programs which have been developed with career preparation in mind have been more conscious of

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[52] Ralph A. Duncan "Higher Education: The Effort to Adjust", Daedalus, Vol. 99, Winter 1970, 141.

the need to provide a potential employer with a meaningful account of the student's experience.

The co-operative program at the University of Waterloo, mentioned elsewhere, adds an extremely important dimension to the information content of a degree. As noted, the program consists of alternating periods of academic training in the university and relevant practical experience in work situations. Students' performance in these work situations is evaluated by their employers and satisfactory performance records are an essential requisite for graduation. Thus, in this instance, the educational content of the students' degree is relevant for an employer, containing as it does an indication of the student's level of job-related knowledge and his ability to cope satisfactorily with the work environment.

The new program in Environmental Studies at York University has given careful consideration to this question of communicating a student's educational experience in a meaningful way. Students in the department come from a variety of backgrounds and have correspondingly different expectations of, and experience in, the program. Each student agrees with a faculty member on a series of objectives which he hopes to meet while in the program. Objectives are reviewed regularly and the student's performance is evaluated against these self-imposed objectives; the student himself thus plays an active part in the evaluation of his own performance.

A prospective employer can obtain information from the university in a number of forms. He may simply ask for confirmation that the student attained his master's degree in Environmental Studies, which, as the department would readily agree, communicates very little. However, upon request, an outline of course material covered will be forwarded to the employer and, if he so requests, he will receive a detailed record of the student's activities at the university; this would include a written statement of the student's objectives, and a written evaluation from the tutor as to his performance within the time covered by the objective. Any comment or explanation which the student feels appropriate regarding his evaluation is also incorporated into this record.

In both instances, these are new programs specifically designed to meet employment-oriented objectives and the faculties involved have been able to make their credential procedure relevant to the objectives of the course.

CHAPTER V - "CREDENTIAL MADNESS"

Certification has acquired many functions in addition to those for which it was expressly introduced--the "latent" functions discussed earlier in this study. Some of these functions have distorted its real purpose, resulting in an undue preoccupation with the symbols of certification. Murray Levine's account of his own professional group bears much truth for our society as a whole:

> Our colleagues have become so obsessed with form at the expense of substance, they have become so concerned with respectability and with the trappings of professional credentials, that they no longer look upon what one actually does. What is important is not demonstrable competence or ideas or empirical verification, but degrees, numbers of courses, amount of supervised experience, and legal and para-legal certification, without any evidence that any of those in any quantity or combination produce better practitioners.[53]

The reasons for this are complex and intricately related to the changes which are taking place in our life-styles and values. In this chapter we shall try to account for some of the effects they are having, both on the educational and

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[53] Quoted in Charles Grosser et al. Non-Professionals in the Human Services (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass Inc. 1969), 60.

occupational systems. Howard Becker provides an articulate justification for such an approach: "If deviation from the symbol were simply the result of natural human orneriness--of Original Sin, so to speak--the sociologist would indeed be nothing more than a muckraker in drawing attention to them. But the fact is that deviations from the ideal are neither random nor idiosyncratic. They do not occur because a few professionals are bad men or weak men. They occur systematically and are created by the operation of social forces."[54] To correct these misuses we must understand the nature of these social forces.

A. The New Status Symbol

Although few would acknowledge it, certification in its many forms has become one of the most important ways for an individual, an occupational group, or even an organization, to achieve high status. An understanding of the reason for this and some of the ways in which it works will provide a valuable insight into a number of problems associated with certification today.

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[54] Howard S. Becker, "The Nature of a Profession", in Nelson B. Henry (ed.), Education for the Professions, National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1962), Part II, Ch.2, 41.

We have considered briefly the fact that a society develops new ways of satisfying the social needs of its members when the established mechanisms prove inadequate, or ineffective, for the functioning of the system. The need for status has undergone just such a change. Once a relatively fixed phenomenon, a man inherited his position in society and this remained with him for life; status was, to use sociological jargon, "ascribed". Until the time our present type of economy started to expand, such a pattern was quite functional; the society was relatively stable, and geographic and social mobility were limited. People knew and accepted their place in the social structure and looked to other ways of proving their worth.

However, with the growing industrialization of Canadian society and the complex social structures required to support it, the old concepts of status lost their immutability. In theory, if not in practice, a man was able to earn his own place in society--status could be "attained".

The most important factor in determining a man's position in the social hierarchy became his occupational role. The system needed fresh inputs of manpower at all levels and the old structures were forced to accommodate new elites. As social and geographic mobility increased, breaking down old family and community relationships, a job provided a man not only with his social status, but with his sense of identity. People think of themselves in terms

of being "a doctor", "an executive", "a scientist" etc.

Sociological studies have shown that the general population tended to view occupations on a status continuum with the established professional groups at one end, and manual workers at the other. "Studies of occupational prestige in a number of countries reveal that, while there are wide variations in prestige within the stratum and even within specific occupations, the professions are accorded more prestige by the general public than any other occupational category."[55]

One of these studies, by B.R. Blishen,[56] showed that this is as true of Canadians as it is of the Americans. In summing up these studies John Porter said, "It would seem that in making judgements of prestige the public tends to assess occupations in terms of the amount of education they involve, the responsibility that they entail, and their earning power."[57]

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[55] A. Inkeles and P. Rosso, "National Comparisons of Occupational Prestige," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, 1956, 329-39.

[56] B.R.Blishen, "The Construction and Use of an Occupational Class Scale," Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science, V. 24, No. 4, 1958, 523.

[57] John Porter, The Vertical Mosiac (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965), 15.

Although wide variations do exist along the occupational continuum, occupations which make significant contributions to the technological society are generally given relatively high prestige, along with occupations which have long been accepted for their importance to society--medicine, law, etc. Thus, for example, as society has started to recognize the contribution of scientists to the community's economic prosperity, so their occupations have grown in status.

Two possibilities are open to an individual to improve his status within the society. He may aim for a position which has an established high level of prestige, or, alternatively, he may try to improve the status of his own particular occupation. In both situations, certification plays an important part.

In the sections that follow we shall examine the ways in which certification is used as a means of acquiring status, not only by individuals, but also by occupational groups and organizations.

1. Everyone a Professional

The established professions have an undisputed place at the top of the occupational hierarchy. It is not surprising, therefore, that other occupational groups with a less secure position should aspire to the prestige and privileges of a profession. Many claim for themselves

the title of profession and, in fact, in popular usage the word has come to be used freely by any occupational group with status aspirations. Sociologists and other students of the professions have tried to develop more specific definitions. However, as one sociologist has commented:

> Theoretical and methodological consensus is not yet so great among sociologists that there is any absolute agreement on the definition of "the professions", and of course among the public at large the debate over the boundary between the "professional" and "non-professional" continues a debate which is kept going by the fact that these terms carry an important assignment of differential occupational prestige.[58]

However, certain basics are agreed upon as necessary to the development of a true professional status:

> ...a high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge early became one of the commonly used defining characteristics of professional behaviour. Generalized and systematic knowledge of professional degree exists in such diverse cultural realms as the physical biological sciences, in religion and theology, in the law, literature, art, mathematics and philosophy. During the last one hundred years,

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[58]Kenneth S. Lynn, The Professions in America (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. 1965), 17.

> the social sciences, including history, economics, psychology, anthropology and sociology, have developed a generalized and systematic knowledge of professional level.[59]

This knowledge is the basis of professional authority and hence privilege for those who have attained the right to licensing or certification. Society has acknowledged their exclusive right to use this knowledge in the service of the community. Such exclusiveness gives the professional considerable status and authority. In fact, because of the client's relative ignorance and dependence on the professional, his "subordination to professional authority vests the professional with a monopoly of judgement. When an occupation strives to professionalization, one of its aspirations is to acquire this monopoly.[60]

To preserve the privileges of this monopoly situation, an aspiring profession seeks the right to control the training for its members, and even more significantly, it seeks to acquire control over admission to its ranks. As Greenwood explains:

> This is achieved by two routes. First, the profession convinces the community no one should

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[59] Ibid, 18.

[60] Ernest Greenwood, "The Elements of Professionalization," in Professionalization, Howard M. Vollmer (ed.) (New Jersey, Prentice Hall Inc., 1966), 13.

> be able to wear a professional title who has not been conferred it by a professional school.... Secondly, the profession persuades the community to institute on its behalf a licensing system for screening those qualified to practice the professional skill. A sine qua non known for receipt of the licence is, of course, a duly granted professional title. Another prerequisite may be an examination before a board of inquiry of personnel who are being drawn from the ranks of the profession.[61]

Certification becomes then the official symbol that an individual has mastered the mystery of his particular profession and is thereby entitled to the privileges this bestows.

For those whose status cannot be taken for granted, there is a watchful concern lest their hard-won position be threatened. The teaching profession provides an interesting case study. The Ontario Teachers' Federation would not object to teachers' colleges being absorbed into the universities, providing they maintain their status as colleges responsible only for the professional education of teachers. The undergraduate degree should, they feel, be obtained in the regular university faculties: "This arrangement places the teacher on an equal footing with all other

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[61] Ibid., 13.

university graduates and frees the profession from the stigma that the teacher graduate is academically inferior."[62]

A source of much concern to teachers is that, unlike other professional groups, they have no control over their own certification procedures, this being the responsibility of the Department of Education. At the present time a federation committee has been set up to study the functions of a Governing Council for the profession, which would set standards for entry and issue certificates. The justification for this move is that "We believe the public requires the protection which comes from certification."[63] Requirements for entry are being increased; preference is now given to four-year honours graduates for senior school teachers.

Noting this as a general trend, Mr. Justice McRuer feels strongly that society should not allow it to continue:

> The granting of self-government is a delegation of legislative and judicial functions and can only be justified as a safeguard to the public interest. The power is not conferred to give or reinforce a professional or occupational status. The relevant question is not "do the practitioners of this occupation desire power of self-government?" but "is self-government

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[62] "Teacher Education" Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario, Submission No. 279, May 1971. 10.

[63] Ibid., 15.

> necessary for the protection of the public?" No right of self-government should be claimed merely because the term "professional" has been attached to the occupation. Power to self-government should not be extended beyond the present limitations, unless it is clearly established that public interest demands it.[64]

2. Organizational Prestige

A glance through the career pages of the "Globe and Mail" provides ample proof of the importance employers attach to formal qualifications. Comptrollers must be C.A.s, production managers should be professional engineers, and for many other jobs, "a university degree is preferred."

As we noted when considering the communication aspects of certification, for considering recent graduates this attitude, although perhaps not very productive, is at least understandable. With little or no experience on which to base a judgement, the employer uses the only tangible proof of ability he has available. However, when the same qualifications are demanded of individuals with years of experience in their field, clearly other motives are involved.

Obviously no single motive is the cause of behaviour as complex as a hiring decision; one can at best indicate some of the most likely. In an attempt to discover these motives, Ivar Berg started a series of interviews with senior

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[64] Report of the Royal Commission Inquiry into Civil Rights, Volume 3, 1162.

business executives responsible for personnel decisions. It proved a frustrating experience:

> Personnel and manpower decisions are made, to be sure, but the histories of such decisions are little more than hazy and unsubstantiated recollections of the "it-seemed-like-a-good-idea" variety. Our sample of firms is as small as it is simply because the responses to probes were so drearily similar from firm to firm that there seemed to be no benefit to be gained from expanding the effort.[65]

After three years experience as an executive recruiting consultant, one of the authors of this paper can testify that Berg would have the same frustrating experience in Ontario. Lengthy discussions with employers to establish the scope of a job and the qualifications considered necessary for good candidates confirm that many executives, often very capable in their own field, are swayed by the prestige of a professional qualification. Confronted with convincing evidence that the responsibilities of a position could be handled by an individual with experience but a lesser qualification, responses to the effect that "I still think the company should have a C.A. in that position" are common.

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[65] Ivar Berg, Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery (New York, Praeger Publishers, 1970), 73.

It is probably not unfair to say that the individual without an accepted qualification, however capable he may be, is continually on trial. He holds his position "in spite of his lack of qualification", and a mistake on his part confirms any misgiving his superior (and sometimes even his subordinates!) may have had. The employee with a professional qualification need have no such fear; he has proven once and for all his capabilities.

The prospects for an executive who, without formal qualifications, has worked his way to a senior position and who finds himself on the job market are bleak indeed. The lack of a qualification reduces job mobility considerably and this seems to have been becoming progressively more true over the past ten years. Thus his only real chance of progress has been to stay with an organization and prove his ability over a prolonged period. The lack of qualification and a prolonged career with one employer, together almost condemn him to unemployment or demotion.

Other instances of this status element in hiring decisions abound. The preference for a Chartered Accountant over a Registered Industrial Accountant, even in cases where the latter's qualification is more directly relevant, or the insistence on a university graduate where a graduate of Ryerson would be just as capable, reflect the sensitivity to differences within the credential hierarchy itself.

Employers seem prepared to pay the higher salaries that a degree can command, even in situations where the job clearly does not require the level of knowledge associated with the degree. Their reasoning that it will be worthwhile in the long term--greater management potential, etc.--is questionable. Meaningful statistics are virtually impossible to obtain, but the tendency for underemployment to lead to high turnover from those who have the mobility which credentials bring seems irrefutable.[66]

Nor is industry the only offender in this regard. Government departments have the same inflexibility written into their classification system. Explaining his rejection of a candidate for a senior position in his group, a senior government administrator admitted that he could probably do the job. The problem lay in the fact that he only had an undergraduate degree which meant that promotion would be impossible, as the next level of classification required a master's degree; the employer was reluctant to put a capable man in a "dead-end" job.

It is this kind of inflexibility in the credential hierarchy which leads to the situation described by Berg: "A number of law schools have recently begun awarding a doctorate to their graduates in place of the traditional

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[66] See, for example, Ivar Berg, Education and Jobs, Ch. VI.

Bachelor of Laws degree. As a result, these graduates automatically start at higher civil-service classifications if they go to work for the federal government, even though their preparation has not changed."[67]

Ulich speaks with some passion of the ways in which universities are affected by the desire for prestige, at the expense of their true mission:

> What remedy, in all likelihood, will most of our college administrators propose for the improvement of college teaching? They will try to recruit their staffs with men who have the doctorate degree. For the sake of academic prestige they will force their younger instructors, who could use their vacations for some independent reading and thinking, to attend summer schools for gradually piling up the necessary number of course units; they will force them to subject themselves to preliminary and general examinations; and all this after these men and women have already gone through a bachelor's and master's trial, passed dozens of course examinations, written paper after paper, and enjoyed hundreds of tests and quizzes. Must we not marvel at the resisting power of the human soul which makes it possible that after all these inflictions there are still some young people left

[67] Ibid., 26.

with imagination, initiative, and sympathy for their fellow creatures?[68]

Certainly it would be unjust to claim that any of our universities are more concerned for prestige than the educational experience of their students. But in organizations geared to produce credentials, it would be surprising if they did not feel it desirable that as many of their staff as possible would have the highest level of credentials--the Ph.D. Ulich offers no solution to the problems caused by what he believes to be an undue preoccupation with academic prestige (impassioned rhetoric is no substitute for constructive proposals). Certainly, however, he draws attention to a process of "qualification" for university teachers which nowhere makes provision for the fact that their prime role is to communicate with and motivate their students. As he points out, the process is not designed to ensure good teachers.

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[68] Robert Ulich, Crisis and Hope in American Education (New York, Atherton Press, 1966), 177.

B. Specialization - The Narrow Path to Obsolescence?

There are a number of forces at work which make specialization an ever-increasing part of life. The "information explosion" means that more and more scientists and other "knowledge workers" have to concentrate their attention on some particular aspect of their own discipline - not only to further the boundaries of existing knowledge, but to make themselves effective practitioners.

Specialization is necessary with scientific and technological advances and is not of itself undesirable. As Ulich points out, the problem lies more in the academic institution than specialization per se:

> The modern alarm over specialization is much more a sign of weakness in the institution in which it grows than a proof of its necessarily evil character. Specialization becomes evil only when severed from the totality of human interest. After all, is not specialization, or, as we may also call it, "concentration" the concomitant to the mind's venture into more and more areas of culture and nature unknown to our ancestors? Do our students prefer the specialized courses only because they are narrow-minded, or because there they feel the close connection between their studies and their calling and, consequently, a stronger motivation? Is there

> not much justified inspiration in a young person's hope that his speciality may help him to become a good physician, a good lawyer, a good teacher, or a good engineer, and thus a more useful member in his society?[69]

Indeed, it may well be both necessary and desirable, but the ways in which it is being attained today have unfortunate consequences for the individual and ultimately society as a whole.

Existing degrees and the systems underlying them are being modified to provide for specialized education. All too often the rigidities which have grown into the system mean that the student acquires this kind of education at the expense of enriching his personal experience and, quite possibly, his occupational opportunities.

The problem, essentially, is to decide how much specialized education is required and at which stage of the educational process it should be started to serve not only the best interests of the individual but the discipline itself. In discussing education for the established professions, Anderson states the nature of the problem as it applies generally:

> The various professions are by no means agreed as to when education for specialization within the profession should occur.... The concept of a

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[69] Ibid., 171-2.

> profession would lead one to the conclusion that education should be unitary. However, strong forces are always at work to permit specialization to develop early. As knowledge expands, as skills are perfected, and as time for training remains constant, the easy solution of the problems presented is to develop specializations within the basic training period.[70]

The use of the Ph.D. program as the major vehicle for advanced specialist training seems in many ways inappropriate. Originally intended as part of the educational process for those who would devote their time to "scholarly research", the Ph.D. is now almost a prerequisite for anyone who aspires to the top of an academically oriented profession. In Ulich's words, society is "driving more and more people up to the level of Ph.D. or Ed.D., or Sc.D., whatever the name may be, who need not be theoretically creative in order to discharge their professional duties honourably, and who could never become real scholars even if they so wished."[71]

In a sense this is an artificially imposed specialization. Aspiring practitioners acquire the knowledge and understanding required from the academic preparation which forms the first part of the Ph.D. requirement. Thereafter

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[70] A. Lester Anderson, "Professional Education: Present Status & Continuing Problems", in Education for the Professions, 18.

[71] Ibid., 176.

they are obliged, because the system demands of them the supreme qualification, to spend two or three years pursuing research in some extremely esoteric aspect of their discipline. Not only may this result in a frustrating and often financially inconvenient interruption in the individual's career, but its potential for wastage to the university and, ultimately, the taxpayer, must be considerable. When a graduate has no genuine interest in in-depth research, but wishes only to satisfy a course requirement, his motivation is likely to be quite different. It will be of more concern to him to find a topic which will satisfy his examiners and maximize his chances of meeting the degree requirements than to contribute in some significant way to the understanding of his field. The motivations and skills of a researcher are unique in themselves and probably quite different from those required of a practising therapist or university teacher. This whole exercise may well contribute nothing to a student's personal education, "except perhaps in terms of self-discipline and patience, virtues that could be learned also by devotion to a worthwhile cause. "[72]

The results of such specialization may be unfortunate when the individual comes to the job market.

Nothing contributes more damagingly to the

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[72] Ibid., 177.

> unemployment of educated talent than rigid specialization and rigid attitudes supporting this specialization. The future is necessarily hazardous for the individual who trains himself to do a specific job, receives an advanced degree for that line of work, and believes that society owes him a living for doing it. If technological innovations reduce the demand for his speciality, he has nowhere to go. On the other hand, if he is broadly trained in fundamental principles, and knows that he might have to apply those principles in varying contexts over the years, he is in a position to survive the ups and downs of the job market.[73]

We hear much today of the unemployed Ph.D.--a situation due, in some part, to the cutback in appropriations for research, on which so many Ph.D.s depend to support the only work they are equipped to do. John Porter feels that the problem is not so much one of over-production as inappropriate specialization. He attributes this to poor educational planning which places too great an emphasis on specific discipline content rather than on content common to all disciplines. "... Post-industrial society is one of accelerated rates of change. Therefore those who

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[73] John Gardner, Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent Too? (New York, Harper & Bros., 1961), 43.

leave our universities should have skills that are flexible in a rapidly changing world."[74]

The converse of an earlier point can affect the Ph.D.'s chances of finding employment -- he quite simply prices himself out of the market. An employer will reason that he cannot afford such an expensive investment for anything but the most specialized of jobs.

Another kind of "dead-end" situation which results from the existing certification process is caused by specialization of a different kind. While many of the health sciences have a common base of knowledge and sometimes technique, the tradition has been for a rigid separation of courses, each administered by a separate faculty or department, offering its own degree or diploma with requirements decided independently. Hence, an individual must commit himself to a particular occupational specialty at the beginning of his post-secondary education. Once graduated there is little flexibility in the system to permit him to change from one area to another without starting his educational program from the beginning. Proposals for combined health sciences schools have recognized this as a problem and should remedy the situation at least in part.

The schools would provide courses in the "core" subjects which would be taken by all students in related

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[74]John Porter et al. Towards 2000, 100.

disciplines. If they wished to move into another field, either a related discipline or a more advanced branch of their own, credit would be given for relevant work already completed.

As we noted, specialization is not an evil in itself. The problems arise when it is made to conform with the rigidities of existing systems. The following examples show that, by taking a fresh approach free from existing constraints, specialization can be put to very positive use.

The Carnegie Commission in the United States put forward a proposal which would introduce more flexibility into the medical training program.[75] They proposed an extra decision-making point between the undergraduate degree and the M.D. which would take the form of an intermediate qualification, to be awarded after completion of the general science requirements. This would serve the double purpose of enabling the faculty to make a first-hand assessment of a student's potential and at the same time would allow the student to decide whether to continue his education towards the M.D. or perhaps a doctorate in biology or physiology. That intermediate qualification

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[75] The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education: Higher Education and the Nation's Health (New York, McGraw Hill, 1970), 9.

could serve as the foundation for a teaching career or, perhaps, with some additional practical training, a career as medical assistant; a much gentler alternative to failing the medical program and being forced either to settle for some lesser option or to start its program from the beginning or to leave university altogether.

Extrapolating from the experience at McMaster, the Council of Medical Deans foresees the possibility of a much more flexible medical training program in which the student would have the option to specialize in some limited field of medicine -- another alternative to outright failure. However, as they point out, this would obviously require a revision in the present licensing procedure to permit licensing restricted to some defined area of medical practice.[76] (Such an approach might be the solution for training staff for the referral clinics whose function would be to make a preliminary diagnosis).

Overspecialization in the education of professionals can, by forcing capable individuals out of the labour market, have obvious negative consequences on society. It can also affect society in more subtle ways. These professionals are the highly educated few who should be concerned about

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[76] "The Role of the Medical School in Health Science Education". Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario, Submission 114, 4.

the destiny of the society in which they live. If in emphasizing the development of their specialized skills the university does not give them the opportunity to acquire a broader view of society and the human condition, it has surely failed not only its graduates but the community in which it exists. Again it is worth emphasizing the role of certification. Most students are faced with the very immediate and pressing problem of obtaining a degree, and this requires them to complete specific courses in a given period of time. Under this system courses in social sciences, etc. have to be built into the programs or many students will just not have time to give them a thought.

In his study of the professions, Lipset cites a sample of a dozen studies to show that "professionals" have increasingly formed the political elite, both as influential participants and as leaders of political parties. He points out that "they are also the best organized occupational groups in society and are thus in a position to exert considerable influence over the political process."[77] He expressed this concern regarding the effects of specialized training:

> By virtue of the specialized and prolonged training and the high level of commitment associated with professional occupations, professionals are

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[77] S. M. Lipset, "The Politics of Professionals", in Professionalization, H. M. Vollmer (ed.)(New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1966), 301.

> more likely to feel frustrated when faced with limited job opportunities and to express their frustration in political protest.[78]

As Ulich rightly points out, specialization is a necessary part of our existence; we have to make sure we approach it as openly as possible:

> If professional, or specialist, education is understood as part of man's grand labour in the service of Humanitas and Veritas, then there is no reason why we should not welcome it. Realistically speaking, specialization is already the master in the house of higher education. The question cannot be how to drive this master out, but how to teach him to cooperate by telling him that his own welfare depends on the welfare of others.[79]

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[78] Ibid., 301.

[79] Robert Ulich, Crisis and Hope in American Education, 173.

C. Certification as a Social Barrier

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations gives a thoughtful review of the literature as to the effects of socio-economic status, on a student's chances of completing post-secondary education.[80] Considering the more objective factors of parents' occupational and educational levels, they conclude that both have an impact on the level of education of their offspring. Those whose parents have lower levels of education are consistently less likely to attend a post-secondary educational institution; even those who do are less likely to complete the program. This is true even for children with "quite respectable levels of ability however defined or measured."

The evidence, they feel, suggests that "by most of the available measures ability (presumably academic ability) itself is related to socio-economic status" and that this is the result of a process of social inheritance and socialization in which school, family, class and community all play their part."[81]

In a sense, the certification process with its insistence on rigid time frames, course content, and its promotion of credential class structures puts the seal on

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[80] "The Next Steps in Higher Education" Brief to the Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, May, 1971.

[81] Ibid., 55.

their fate. Under existing systems, if an individual fails to get through the educational process at the appropriate time and obtain some form of certification, his chances of achieving a satisfying career are minimal and his prospects for a second chance slight. Clearly, in a society which prides itself on equality of opportunity, this is unacceptable--credentials are the key which open employment doors and they are fast becoming the only key.

The reasons for a student's failure within the educational process are complex and include motivation and teaching methods as well as abilities. Any of these may change--motivation may become stronger as an individual with a "respectable level of ability" confronts the prospect of a routine, empty existence. But for those who raise their sights without having obtained some proof of their learning ability, the obstacles may prove insurmountable. New measures and ways of reporting ability less dependent on academic experience and new learning experiences may be needed, together with a rejection of the notion that if an individual does not acquire a qualification during the period of continuous education he must be a failure.

Certification plays its part in other forms of discrimination. Not only are the disadvantaged groups prevented by economic and cultural factors from obtaining the certification needed to enjoy the advantages of our

society; they suffer, too, when it comes to receiving the services which they, often more than any other group in society, so badly need. Certification is involved in an indirect, but still significant, way:

> ... the social service professions -- medicine, mental health, welfare, social work and even education -- have contributed to the disenfranchisement of the poor and reinforced their feelings of powerlessness and rejection, as agencies which once effectively delivered services to the poor have been transformed to a great extent into agencies for the distribution of services to the advantaged. This has occurred, not out of malice or stupidity of choice, but as a consequence of the brand of professionalism that has developed over the past 20 years, itself the result of certain social and cultural forces.[85]

Reiff sees this situation coming about as a result of the development of more and more specialties within the health services. This has led to a "prestige caste system" within the profession -- a system in which advancement depends on obtaining diplomas and degrees rather than on demonstrated ability: "If one possesses the proper

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[85] Robert Reiff, "Dilemmas of Professionalism" in Non-professionals in the Human Services, 58-59.

credentials one is considered to be competent and effective; one who lacks these credentials is not regarded as competent or effective."[86]

This concern for status and the security of its outward trappings has meant that many non-professionals are prevented by the professionals who run the social agencies from making a potentially valuable and much needed contribution. (Ironically, the discriminating effects of the educational process mean that most of the professionals come from a social background very different from their clients and are probably not as sensitive to their needs as the non-professionals from similar backgrounds). Laymen who were trained as psychotherapists under an experimental program conducted by Margaret Rioch proved very competent, but only with the greatest reluctance were they accepted by the professionals in local agencies.[87]

Undoubtedly it is this tendency to "write off" people without qualifications which makes it so difficult for the poor to get a say in the delivery of government aid services which have such an impact on their lives.

Reiff feels this sort of situation to be one of

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86 Ibid., 59

87 Ibid., 54

the great injustices of our society. The solution, perhaps, calls for the use, in their own communities, of non-professionals who have acquired skills through experience, not education, and who understand the relationships and problems of the groups of which they are members--one very constructive way of restoring the disenfranchised poor to active participation in society. But career paths need to be developed which depend not on credentials but rather demonstrated proof of skills in service.

CHAPTER VI - CONCLUSIONS AND SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

A. SUMMARY

We have seen that for many reasons there is a tremendous emphasis in our society on credentials of one sort or another. Professor Duncan's assessment of the situation in the United States is as true for our own society: "Probably the most serious barrier to a rationalization of the higher education structure as we know it is in the United States today, is the extent to which credentials--degrees, certificates, credits--have come to be accepted as a measure of intellect or skill attainment."[88] Credentials have become an end in themselves--the symbol has taken the place of reality.

In a complex interplay of social forces, the occupational and educational systems of our society have embarked on an "inflationary spiral" in the degree business. Employers looking for ways of selecting the most talented applicants use degrees as the only available measure of potential. With no evidence that their measure is at all valid, the demand for degrees grows and the educational system works to meet the demand and at the

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[88]Ralph A. Duncan, "Higher Education: The Effort to Adjust", Daedalus, Vol. 99, Winter, 1970, 141.

same time tries to satisfy its own standards.

Two unfortunate consequences result. With universities oriented towards meeting the demand for graduates, degrees have become the end product of the university system. To a certain extent the status of a university is now measured by the number of graduate students, particularly Ph.D.s, it can produce. The growing emphasis on graduates has resulted in a pressure to produce a new elite, with the masters degree now assuming the same significance as the bachelors degree of a generation ago.

And what of those who have not had the benefit of a university education? Professor Ulich claims, with some justification, "We think we mobilize democracy by drawing as many people as possible into college. What we do not seem to realize is that in this way we make good education more and more expensive, and deprive the non-college block of influence and initiative. For with the eyes of everybody directed toward a college diploma it becomes increasingly hard to prove that a man without this piece of paper may be capable of leadership."[89]

Is then our existing degree system a meaningless ritual perpetuated by those who have been through the system and who stand to lose in material or ego terms by

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[89] Robert Ulich, Crisis and Hope in American Education, (New York, Atherton Press, 1965), 155.

seeing it substantially altered? Because of its sensitive position in the social system, changes in the certification process could have far-reaching effects on the nature of education in the province.

B. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

Certification as a social mechanism has lost its effectiveness through overloading. Too many different groups have put it to their own use, distorting the functions for which it was intended. The latent functions of certification have, because of their importance to those concerned, dictated the direction and the forms which certification has taken. Archaic degrees and diplomas have been allowed to continue because no one has stated clearly the objectives of certification and devised the most effective ways of meeting those objectives, given the present demands on education.

The existing forms are so much a part of our way of life that it is difficult to stand outside the system and look at them objectively. Change will not come easily and it is impossible to make any significant change in the certification process without changing, at the same time, many other aspects of the educational system, and not just at the post-secondary level.

We would stress very strongly that, in our view, attempts to modify specific forms of certification in isolation will produce little real progress. The complex of social forces of which certification is a part are so well-developed and attitudes so strong that only by acting on the total process will any real progress be

made. With this in mind we put forward the following guiding principles for change:

1. It must be recognized that certification is not an end in itself and should not, therefore, dictate the nature of an individual's educational experience.
2. The prime functions to be served by certification are:
   a) to provide as informative a means of communicating an individual's mastery of some body of knowledge or skill as possible, given certain realistic time and administrative constraints;
   b) to protect the interests of the community at large by ensuring that those who offer a service, vital to the wellbeing of the community, are capable of providing that service and put the interests of the community above motives of gain or self-aggrandizement.
3. Any system of certification which encourages the formation of hierarchies within an occupational group is likely to reduce the effectiveness of that group to provide its intended service.
4. Certification should, above all, permit flexibility, both in the individual's educational and in his

occupation experience, so that as far as possible his education becomes a continuous and personalized experience. These principles lead to two somewhat more specific statements about the nature of changes required:

1. *New forms of certification must concentrate on activities and not all-encompassing titles. Thus, an individual is qualified to perform certain services, not to be a doctor.*
2. *Extraneous requirements for certification should be examined and, where possible, eliminated; these would include:*
   a) *Time and residence requirements, as for example, those prescribed for a university degree;*
   b) *Courses not relevant to the requirements of the individual's career or his interests.*

Our major recommendation is a sweeping one and in making it we are all too aware of the complications which will result.

We believe that the Province of Ontario should abandon completely the existing system of degrees and diplomas. Students should instead receive a descriptive record of courses taken and their performance in these courses. With this approach, an individual would no longer attend college or university for a set period of three or more years and be obliged to take a specific

number of courses; his objectives in attending the institution would be discussed and an appropriate program agreed upon. Some constraints would probably be necessary in this open system for reasons of administration and cost. As a start, such an approach might be introduced at the graduate or professional educational level; the experience gained there would be used and modified to extend to the whole post-secondary education group.

The Ph.D., with its heavy research requirement, would no longer dominate the educational scene as students followed courses more relevant to their needs and interests.

Problems there will undoubtedly be and we mention some of the more obvious.

First, it is difficult to undertake such a step in isolation. Students who obtained their education in Ontario's post-secondary educational institutions would undoubtedly have difficulties with the rigidities of the old system in other provinces, particularly with regard to licensing and certification requirements.

Within Ontario itself the problems would be considerable. The administrative complexities involved in admission procedures, with the need to provide a much more personal counselling of students regarding their

choice of courses, would require a very different approach to student admissions, although, of course, under the new system there would be no reason for all students to start their programs in the fall. Education of the public, particularly employers, to understand and accept the new system would be essential. It would require much more flexible attitudes towards qualification and education generally. Ideally, people should be able to continue their education while employed and employers would have to be prepared to grant the time for this.

Much greater flexibility would be required in licensing and certification laws. As we suggested above, people would qualify to perform certain tasks, taking the courses required to do so but always with the possibility of adding to them and so increasing their scope of responsibility.

From an educational point of view there would undoubtedly be problems, certainly in the beginning. Our present educational system provides an essentially structured kind of learning experience with, for many, a specific--if irrelevant--motivation to obtain a degree. Examinations, tests and a constant fear of failure provide the spur to effort. This would largely disappear and for many the adjustment would be difficult until such time as the school system changes its own motivational approaches.

(Preliminary steps in this direction are encouraging--students do study even if they are not forced to.) However, under the new system, failure would not be a final life-damning experience and, as we commented, motivations can change when an individual is confronted with the real need and relevance of education.

Before taking a step of this magnitude, much more research has to be done to understand the implications for educational institutions, the professions, the occupational system generally and Ontario society as a whole. We noted in an earlier chapter that the present system of certification is sustained by a complex interplay of social forms. We must understand the likely effect on these social forms of so dramatic a change before we can decide if we are prepared to cope with the consequences.

APPENDIX A

A LIST OF LICENSED OR CERTIFIED OCCUPATIONS IN ONTARIO

The following occupational groups have the statutory power "to license, govern and control those persons engaged in them":

Architects

Chiropodists

Chiropractors

Dental Technicians

Dentists

Doctors

Embalmers and Funeral Directors

Lawyers

Masseurs

Naturopaths

Nurses

Opthalmic Dispensers

Optometrists

Osteopaths

Pharmacists

Physiotherapists

Professional Engineers

Psychologists

Public Accountants

APPENDIX A ... contd

Radiological Technicians

Surveyors

Veterinarians

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CORRESPONDENCE

A request for general information and opinions went to approximately fifty people. The response to these requests was minimal. Helpful letters were received from:

Dean Bocking, Faculty of Medicine, The University of Western Ontario.

Harold B. Dean, Deputy General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Dr. B. P. DesRoches, Director of Education, Ontario College of Pharmacy.

Harold G. Dillon, Assistant Executive Director, Ontario Hospital Association.

Dean John R. Evans, Faculty of Medicine, McMaster University.

Dean Thomas G. Feeney, Faculty of Law (Common Law) University of Ottawa.

Kenneth F. Pownell, Registrar-Secretary-Treasurer, The Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario.

L. M. Richardson, Executive Assistant, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

Dean W. S. Tarnopolsky, Faculty of Law, University of Windsor.

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INTERVIEWS

Interviews of relevance to this study were held with:

Dr. D. M. Aitken, Vice-Registrar, Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Raymond G. Berry, Advisor in Psychology, Professional Services Branch, Mental Health Division, Department of Health.

Dean A. L. Chute and Associate Dean J. W. Steiner, Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto.

Horace Krever, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario.

Dean G. E. LeDain, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University.

Ross Munro, former education correspondent, Globe & Mail.

Walter Pitman, Member of the Provincial Parliament for Peterborough, and New Democratic Party Education Critic.

Michael Phillips, President of the Students Council of the School of Nursing, University of Toronto.

Dr. Glenn Sawyer, General Secretary, Ontario Medical Association.

Douglas T. Wright, Chairman, Commission on Post-Secondary Education in Ontario; Chairman, Committee on University Affairs.

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